

where we can start is by improving education.

Females make up slightly more than 50 percent of this country's population. Yet, less than 30 percent of America's scientists are women. In addition, the National Science Foundation reports that the jobs facing today's workers will require higher skill levels in science, math and technology more than ever before.

Quite clearly, there is no way that America can have a technically competent workforce if the majority of students, females, do not study science, math and technology. That is why I introduced a bill last Congress to help school districts encourage girls to pursue careers in science and math.

Although my bill is formally titled *Getting Our Girls Ready for the 21st Century Act*, it is really known as *Go Girl*.

*Go Girl* is designed to create a bold new workforce of energized young women in science, math, technology and engineering.

Last year, it was included as an amendment to two separate bills in the Committee on Science and the Committee on Education and the Workforce. This year I will be reintroducing *Go Girl*.

Along with improving early education, we must also invest in job training programs and initiatives that give women the tools they need to become self-sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that one of the best tools a woman can have is a quality education, since it is nearly impossible to get a good job without a strong educational background.

That is why I am working on legislation to allow education to count as work when we reauthorize the welfare to work legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this month, the month of March, encourages us to think about the progress women have made, and it reminds us to use every instrument in our power to continue to move forward. We must continue to dedicate ourselves to the jobs ahead. We must improve education for young girls and adolescents. We must invest in job training for women, ensure equal pay for equal work, and we must protect these rights, both in the United States and abroad.

It is said that a woman's work is never done, hence we are here tonight working in the middle of the night. Our predecessors knew the same thing in 1848.

Today, we know that with challenges ahead, we have our work cut out for us. We must continue so that we can get the job done.

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here

today as the Democratic cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, being the first cochair of this millennium, and happy to share this role with my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

We will be submitting an education appropriation to address the role of education and our children.

Mr. Speaker, we are here today to celebrate March as Women's History Month and to highlight the extraordinary achievements of all women throughout our history, while recognizing the equally significant obstacles they have had to overcome along the road to success.

Women's History Month has progressed from Women's History Week, established in 1978, to coincide with International Women's Day, which we will celebrate tomorrow, March 8th.

It is during this time that we acknowledge American women of all cultures, classes and ethnic backgrounds who have served as leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement, not only to secure their own rights to equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement, and other movements to create a more fair and just civil society for all.

Women have played, and continue to play, a critical economic, cultural and social role in every sphere of our Nation's life by constituting a significant portion of the labor workforce working in and out of the home.

One of the most significant roles of women is that of mother, bearing children, nurturing and protecting their children.

In an effort to provide for the well-being of her children, a mother takes charge of all health and educational needs critical to the child's development. Thus tonight we will focus on women and education.

As a mother and grandmother, I am well aware of the importance of a quality education in the lives of young people and know that next to mother a teacher is probably one of the most influential persons in a child's life.

As a former educator and the only Member of Congress to serve on the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, I have been committed to promoting quality teachers in our Nation's public schools.

Tonight I would like to discuss the issues of teacher recruitment, retention and professional development.

Mr. Speaker, it is widely recognized that investments in teacher knowledge are among the most productive means of increasing student learning. Despite our gains, much work still needs to be done. We need to ensure that all of this Nation's children are taught by well-prepared and well-qualified teachers who have access to ongoing professional development and lifelong learning opportunities.

The creation of more vigorous and rigorous professional standards for teachers is one methodology to address teacher preparedness. These standards ensure that teachers will know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to children; that they will understand how children learn and what to do when they are having difficulty; and that they will be able to use effective teaching methodology for those who are learning easily, as well as for those who have special needs.

While new teaching standards may hold great possibilities for raising the quality of teacher preparation, these advances will have little impact on the Nation's most vulnerable students if school districts continue to hire teachers who are emergency credentialed and who are assigned to teach outside of their field of expertise.

According to the Journal of Teacher Education, students learn significantly less from teachers who are not prepared in their teaching area. Fields like mathematics, physical science, special education, and bilingual education are suffering from a shortage of teachers across different regions of this country.

These shortages occur in part because some States prepare relatively few teachers but have rapidly growing student enrollment. In my State of California, enrollments are projected to increase by more than 20 percent in that State by the year 2007.

In order to achieve the educational goals and success we hold for all of our children, we must develop strategies that do not trade off student learning for the hiring of unqualified teachers. In addition, we must be willing to provide qualified teachers, especially in the urban areas, with professional salaries and much needed training and services.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to celebrate this month as Women's History Month.

We also need to create high quality mentor programs for beginning teachers and expand teacher education programs in high need fields so that individuals wishing to teach math, science and special education can obtain the training necessary to accomplish their goals. I am committed to ensuring that America's teachers are well trained, and well compensated. What goes on in classrooms between teachers and students may be the core of education, but it is profoundly shaped by the policies we propose and pass in Congress. We must support the work of teachers and school administrators and work together to strengthen America's educational system. It is my hope that together, we can develop innovative methods to ensure that there is a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child in the United States of America. Women across America let's celebrate this month and showcase the accomplishments of women.